

YOUR MENTAL HEALTH MATTERS



65 Messimer Dr., Newark, OH 43055  
Phone: 740-522-1341 Fax: 740-522-4464  
E-mail: mhalc@alink.com www.mhalc.org

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YOUR MENTAL  
HEALTH MATTERS

There is NO health without mental health! www.mhalc.org

HERE'S TO GOOD MENTAL HEALTH!



Penny Sitler,  
Executive Director  
(740) 788-0302  
psitler@mhalc.org

Dear Friends of MHA,

Mental Health America, its affiliates, and other advocates from around the country have celebrated Mental Health Month every May since 1949. During this month, we reach millions of people with messages of and resources for health and hope. Mental Health America of Licking County (MHALC) is proud to be affiliated with the national organization that started this tradition. And we're just as proud that it has been embraced so universally.

2015's Mental Health Month theme is "B4Stage4". Here's why: Mental health concerns are no different from any other physical health concerns. They should be thought about and treated the same way – long before they reach Stage 4. If someone finds out they have cancer, they get immediate treatment. They would never wait till the disease is in Stage 4! For too long, mental health issues have not been framed in the same way. Instead, too many people have been trapped in Stage 4 thinking about mental illness. They wait until after a crisis – until someone is a danger to themselves or others – before they act. This is wrong. We don't do this for cancer, heart disease or diabetes. We shouldn't do it

for mental health concerns either.

Mental Health America dedicates itself to mental health. We work for prevention for all; for early identification and intervention for those at risk; for integrated health, behavioral health, and other services for those who need them; and for recovery as a goal.

So this May, we're asking everyone to help us turn the attention of our nation to prevention and early intervention, before mental health concerns become mental health crises. That's really what acting before Stage 4 is all about. Contact MHALC at 740-522-1341 or [mhalc@alink.com](mailto:mhalc@alink.com) for information to help a friend or a loved one with mental health issues. Go to [www.mhalc.org](http://www.mhalc.org) for free online mental health screenings. Let us know if you would like to participate in Mental Health First Aid training or if your organization or company would like a presentation on any mental health issue.

Please **join MHALC** to help us continue providing important services to Licking County (fill out the form on the last page of this newsletter or visit [www.mhalc.org](http://www.mhalc.org)). All of these efforts are part of keeping the focus of May on mental health – a time when we dedicate ourselves to protecting our health, to preserving our mental health,

and to preventing bad and sometimes tragic outcomes from ever happening again. Remember, there is *no* health without mental health.

In March, we hosted an old favorite fundraiser, Java & Jazz, at the beautiful Midland Theatre with renowned singer/song writer Livingston Taylor at a meet and greet prior to a live auction and concert. Thanks to our sponsors, Englefield Oil, Jim and Monie Havens, Licking Memorial Health Systems, Debbie Matesich, MedBen, Park National Bank, River Road Coffee, State Farm®, Stella Artois and The Energy Cooperative, and all those in attendance, the proceeds will help MHA sustain our programming and services to the community.

The Eve Elliott Easter Project in April brought in over 2500 baskets of candy and fruit, all delivered to people in nursing homes, treatment centers, shelters and the elderly living alone. Thanks to the generosity of scout troops, church and youth groups, clubs and families who donated baskets and funding, MHA was able to fulfill every request. A lot of joy was delivered by the Chamber of Commerce Community Leadership participants.

I can't say enough about the generous supporters of MHA's mission who make our work possible!

Penny Sitler



SPRING 2015 EDITION

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Newark, OH 43055

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Fax: (740) 522-4464  
E-mail: mhalc@alink.com  
www.mhalc.org



@mhalickingcty

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Mission

The mission of Mental Health America of Licking County is to promote good mental health and wellness and to achieve victory over mental illness.

Vision

Mental Health America of Licking County envisions a just, humane and healthy society in which all people are accorded respect, dignity and the opportunity to achieve their full potential free from stigma and prejudice.



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**YOUR MEMBERSHIP CONTRIBUTION**  
to Mental Health America of Licking County promotes mental wellness and fights mental illness. It also funds prevention, education and services.

<input type="checkbox"/> \$1000 and over	<b>Major Benefactor**</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> \$500—\$999	<b>Patron**</b>	<b>**Entitles businesses to a mental health training program for employees.</b> (Please call Mental Health America at 740.522.1341 to schedule a program. )
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Please make check payable to **MENTAL HEALTH AMERICA OF LICKING COUNTY**.  
Your contributions to Mental Health America of Licking County are tax deductible as provided by law. Mental Health America of Licking County is a not-for-profit 501(c)(3).

Card # \_\_\_\_\_ Exp. Date \_\_\_\_\_ Signature \_\_\_\_\_

YOUR MENTAL HEALTH MATTERS

SUICIDE PREVENTION PROGRAM

The Suicide Prevention Program nurtures the mental health of the youth in Licking County through activities like Share the Love, which, despite the cold weather and the cancellation of school, took place on Friday, February 20th at Newark High School. Participants spent the evening sending messages to friends, family and other contacts via social media. These messages were to show their contacts that they are loved. During other portions of the evening, the group heard stories about losing a loved one to suicide or surviving an attempt. One of the speakers, local artist Michelle Adkins, shared her collage artwork including one made specifically for Share the Love. This incredible piece is on display at Mental Health America.

Prizes were awarded to the students who had the most responses to their messages and for collecting donations for Suicide Prevention. The group enjoyed Don & Sue's pizza and homemade cookies baked by MHA staff. The evening was a perfect way to spread warmth on a wintery evening.

The Suicide Prevention program travels to schools in Licking County daily. Justina is happy to say that, the Signs of Suicide (SOS) program has reached 60% of the middle and high schools in Licking County. At the end of the SOS program, students are given the opportunity to speak with a mental health professional. This year 15% of the students indicated they would like to talk to someone about mental health

issues, and many admitting to contemplating or even attempting suicide. Throughout the month of January, Justina organized depression screenings in Licking County high schools. The goal of these screenings is to empower students to seek the help the need and to reduce the number of suicide deaths. 35% of the students were identified as having signs of depression during the screenings and were immediately evaluated by mental health professionals who volunteered their time during the screening process. Many times, these programs offer opportunities for students to talk about issues they find difficult to talk about at home.

In addition to many school activities, MHALC's Suicide Prevention Program is also part of the Licking County Suicide Prevention Coalition. Established in 2002, the Coalition's mission is to reduce the number of deaths by suicide in Licking County and to increase people's willingness to seek help. The Coalition is made up of private citizens, staff of various social services and mental health organizations, a deputy coroner and school staff and meets monthly to discuss the suicide statistics in Licking County and better ways to educate and create awareness in our community.

Another educational component of Suicide Prevention is the Gatekeeper Training Program. Provided to businesses, individuals or agencies that deal with people on a regular basis, this

research-based training helps individuals understand the sign of suicide and the proper way to proceed in getting help to people in crisis. MHALC also partners with Mental Health & Recovery for Licking and Knox Counties to offer Mental Health First Aid and Mental Health First Aid for Youth. This specialized 8 hour training is available to anyone in the community to educate people on how to assist an individual experiencing a mental health crisis.

Programs like Suicide Prevention are critical for the health and wellbeing of our community. MHALC urges local individuals, organizations and businesses to participate in training that will help make Licking County a better place to live.



3rd Annual  
LOU MITCHELL  
MEMORIAL GOLF  
OUTING FOR  
SUICIDE PREVENTION  
Moundbuilders Country Club  
125 N. 33rd Street  
Newark, Ohio  
Monday, June 29, 2015  
Check in 12:00  
Simultaneous Start 1:00 pm  
Cookout 6:00 pm

Justina Wade,  
Suicide Prevention  
Coordinator  
suicideprevention@mhalc.org  
(740) 788-0353



YOUTH SELF-ADVOCACY

This new program was developed through a partnership with Mental Health America of Licking County and the Licking County Board of Developmental Disabilities. Youth Self-Advocacy teaches youth with development disabilities how to speak up, request help, negotiate and utilize resources. This year, the program has expanded to six schools.

Coordinator Justina Wade's focus is to help all participants discern themselves. She specifically targets their individual skills and strengths, their likes and dislikes, and the challenges they face daily.

Cultivating communication and problem-solving skills are key components to the development of each student. Another way Justina helps students realize their voice is to stress the knowledge of individual rights and responsibilities. Equally important is the emphasis on goal setting as each young student negotiates the future.

Justina Wade, Youth Self-Advocacy Coordinator  
jwade@mhalc.org (740) 788-0353



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How can I help MHA?

HOW THE KROGER COMMUNITY REWARDS PROGRAM WORKS FOR ALL OF US!

We are so excited about the Kroger Community Rewards Program and its potential impact for MHALC! Our support has grown from three participating shoppers to 15 in just one year and we earned over \$125 during the past quarter!

Every time you swipe your Kroger Plus card, while you still receive fuel rewards and coupons, MHALC receives a portion of every dollar you spend. This is such an easy way to contribute to our programs.

Please follow the easy instructions below to become part of the MHALC community. If you have signed up in the past, please renew your community information each year. If we can be of any assistance, please call our office.

Go to [www.kroger.com](http://www.kroger.com).  
Go to Community tab.  
Click on Community Rewards Program.  
Click on the COLUMBUS Enroll Now button.  
Put in your information and Kroger card #.  
Be sure to link your card to MENTAL HEALTH AMERICA OF LICKING COUNTY. Group # 91467.



Shop on Amazon and Support MHALC! Through the Amazon Smile program, 0.5% of your purchase will be donated to the charity of your choice.

Sign-up is simple:

- Go to [smile.amazon.com](http://smile.amazon.com) and sign into your existing Amazon account.
- Search and select Mental Health America of Licking County to make it your charity of choice.
- The purchasing process and products are exactly the same on AmazonSmile as they are on Amazon.

Donating has never been as quick and easy! Please share with your friends and family and help MHALC continue to provide our much-needed services.

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# THANK YOU SO MUCH FOR YOUR SUPPORT!

Every year at this time MHALC has our annual membership drive. It’s a great time to think about the mental health of our community and a perfect time for you to ***join*** MHALC. We keep our administrative and overhead expenses very low, and we are responsible in spending the funds we work hard to get. Our dedicated staff gives their all in spite of the challenges we face every day.

We have made great progress in eradicating stigma, provided valuable community support, prevention and education services, opened the doors for people experiencing mental illnesses to enjoy the Compeer program, provided a safe haven after school and during the summer to hundreds of youth at the YES Club, helped many work toward financial independence via Bridges Out of Poverty, taught people to be better parents with Parent Support programming, provided free support groups so people can recover and lead a better quality of life, and educated thousands of youth and adults in suicide prevention.

We serve over 15,000 individuals every year (unduplicated), use evidence-based best practices and measure our outcomes so we know we are effective in providing services and helping people. None of our programs are fully funded, so your support of the important work we do is critical!

Mental Health America of Licking County would like to recognize the following individuals and organizations for their support received from January 1, 2014 through December 31, 2014.

*We make every effort to accurately reflect donations. Please call 522-1341 if you feel we have inadvertently left your name out and please accept our apologies.*

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McGaughy, Mr. Bob  
McLean, Dr. Janice  
Mental Health & Recovery  
for Licking & Knox



## YES CLUBHOUSE

through a neuroscience course. Another exciting educational opportunity for all girls at YES along with Girl Scouts is the NASA program, exploring world science and the phases of the moon.



Lots of wonderful things took place at YES Club this winter. The high school students began working with the Granville Studio Visual Arts on the STEM (Science, Technology, Education, Mathematics) program. Each week members studied a new artist’s creations and designs. After this careful study, students were asked to recreate what they learned. A gallery show is planned for May 18<sup>th</sup> at COTC/OSU Newark campus to showcase these innovative creations. The high school group also visited LA TEA DA in Granville. Students learned about proper etiquette as well as more about the SPARK program which offers employment to developmentally disabled adults in this community.

The middle school group has been collaborating with the Licking County Health Department on their STAND campaign to encourage others to stand up against tobacco use. In addition, middle schoolers are working closely with students from Denison University learning about brain and body functions

Even with the relentless winter weather, YES Club was part of some amazing outreach programs. YES held a Health Fair Day engaging students in various health screenings. Dr. Hiebel from Earthworks Dental performed dental checks, representatives from Rejuvenations spoke about skin care, and Kathy Weise from Newark Optometry performed preliminary vision screenings.

A Valentine’s Day Dance was held at The Skylight in downtown Newark. This dance was open to all community youth between the ages of 11 and 18.



Our frigid February emphasized a need for warmth in our community . YES Club partnered with the South Newark Civic Association, as well as many community members, for our first #NewarkLove community service project. We collected scarves, hats and gloves and attached them to trees downtown near the courthouse and on Railroad Street. The group also attached inspirational messages to the items as a way to encourage anyone needing warmth.

During the week of Spring Break, we featured some exciting musical performances: self-taught violinist, Humble G, who has performed over 500 times including a performance for President Barack Obama; and musical group Afripeans, who use a melodic blend of European strings and African drums. We are also excited to have local musician Tom Carroll back again this year.

YES Club participated in South Newark Civic Association’s Neighborhood Spring Cleanup on Saturday, April 11<sup>th</sup> and on April 30<sup>th</sup> YES plans to be a part of the WE are the Majority Rally at the Statehouse in Columbus.

The YES Club may be reached at (740) 522-0937.

## MEET THE YES STAFF



Amanda Vozzella, LSW  
Program Director

Tiffany Myers  
High School Ed Coordinator

Cory Stutes  
Middle School Ed Coordinator

Jo Henthorne  
Middle School Ed Coordinator

Amy Sanders  
Office Manager

**YES Club says goodbye**  
Vee Hottle, YES Director for 22 years, retired on April 10. The Board of Trustees and staff at MHA wish her all the best in her retirement. Vee has had an exemplary career and she will be missed by everyone including the children at YES Club. Since 1992, YES Club has provided a safe haven for teens in Licking County. Vee’s passion and dedication to YES Club will never be forgotten. Thanks to Vee for the commitment, dedication and for the enormous impact on this community. Erin Ours, Activities Supervisor for 8 years, has left YES Club to pursue other opportunities. Erin provided direct care, love, mentoring and developmental activities to many youth. She was more than a staff member; she stood for what YES believes in and the core of what it is: a safe place, a home and a united family. She truly is, and always will be, a part of the YES Club family and she is wished the very best in the future!

## YOUR MENTAL HEALTH MATTERS

## GIRLS IN PROGRESS

## Girls In Progress

Girls In Progress (GIP) is a mentoring and intervention program targeting middle school girls in the Newark City School District. The program began through the collaborated efforts of MHA's staff and Academic Opportunities for Success (AOS) Linkage Coordinator for Newark City Schools Dava Kaltenecker. These visionaries believe early intervention is the key to reaching these vulnerable young girls. The more positive adult support these students receive, the more likely they are to have better school attendance and graduate on time, develop healthier relationships, and place more value on themselves to help them as they enter into adulthood.

Originally, the program met five times each week during the 2013-14 school year. MHA does not have the staff to sustain this ambitious goal, but through the dedication and hard work of Program Coordinator Shari Johnston, Dava and several other MHALC staff members, the agency was able to meet three times each week in one middle school for the fall semester of the 2014-15 school year. In the winter semester of the 2014-15 school year, the program expanded to reach another middle school, and the program has received financial support from a Denison University-sponsored Pay it Forward Grant and the Licking County Foundation.

Shari sees the need for this program every time she meets with these young ladies. Shari's childhood was reminiscent of those she works with today and her desire is to help these young girls reach for more. Shari works to help them mine out meaning in their lives by broadening their horizons and allowing them to have experiences beyond their individual worlds.

Through many activities, Shari strives to help GIP participants build their resiliency and instill values and self-esteem. One way Shari has found to open conversation is through art journaling. Through this artistic medium, the girls are encouraged to explore and create. By encouraging self-expression, dialogue begins to flow more freely about the issues they face each day. Many of these young people come from homes facing drug addiction, poverty, the early death of a parent or one or both parents in prison. Shari is careful to stress that the members respect each other and asks them to keep discussions confidential as a way to teach them about building relationships. Shari treats each GIP member as a valued individual from the first time they meet.



While Shari likes watching the girls come alive through creativity, Dava says the exposure trips the group takes are the portion of the program she enjoys most. She loves to watch the girls interact during these outings. The trips are planned very intentionally to introduce GIP participants to strong, responsible, prominent women and have included a visit to the Columbus Museum of Arts that highlighted women in the arts and the life of Central Ohio artist Aminah Robinson. The group also traveled to the Licking County Municipal Courts where they spent time with Marcia J. Phelps, Licking County Municipal Court Clerk. In March, the group met with some of the members of Licking County's Women in Non-Profit Leadership group. Other staff members from MHALC bring strong leadership and creative activities as well. These activities provide opportunities for

discussion about wellness, including education about mental illness, or they can teach these young people something new like needle arts and baking cookies.

The GIP program proves the importance of mentoring and intervention. Dava attests she has witnessed an improvement in these students' attendance, communication and behavior. When she visits the past members (now in high school), they ask about the program and express their desire to continue. Teachers have noticed an improvement in these young girls' behavior, and they notice the past members have created a unique bond. With the new funding and the continued efforts of Dava, Shari, teachers and the staff of MHALC, this program can continue to flourish along with these very important girls in progress.

Shari Johnston  
Compeer /Girls in  
Progress Coordinator  
(740) 788-0303  
compeer@mhalc.org



## Compeer

If you or someone you know needs help, below are some resources for you:

Local 24/7 Crisis Line:  
2-1-1

National Hotline:  
1-800-273-TALK (8255)

Counseling:  
Behavioral Healthcare Partners  
(740) 522-8477

Mid-Ohio Psychological  
Services (740) 281-1777  
The Woodlands (740) 349-7066  
Psychological Consultants (740) 522-2230  
Psychological & Counseling Services  
(740) 587-5252

Mental Health America:  
Email: mhalc@alink.com  
(740) 522-1341

## SPRING 2015 EDITION

## BRIDGES OUT OF POVERTY

Bridges Out of Poverty (BOP) works to remove barriers individuals and families in poverty face on a daily basis. People are provided support without bias, stereotypes or stigma to ensure that regardless of the situation being faced they will consistently be afforded equal opportunities in education, employment and life goals. Poverty drastically affects and controls every area of a person's life; the most affected are the children of families who have been unable to rise above poverty and the long-term consequences of living in poverty. Our schools are filled with children and young adults who have amazing potential but lack the resources and encouragement to utilize their personal strengths. Every day we see children join the ranks of those who are having trouble academically. Many times legal issues follow due to frustration and lack of problem-solving skills. When we help the parents we are helping their children who are our future!

**Getting Ahead (GA) is a component of the BOP program which includes:**

- Financial literacy
- Budgeting
- Understanding socio-economic differences between income classes
- Job and life skills
- Managing change
- Managing stress

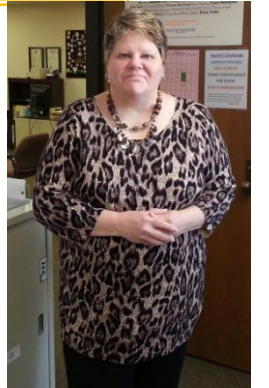
Poverty simulations and training are also components of the BOP program which create a common bond and thread for the community to learn from. Empathy and understanding come from a shared knowledge and community support. Learning to stand up for your values, beliefs and for yourself is so important, especially when raising children and giving them the necessary tools and resources needed to survive, strive, learn and grow. The BOP program creates a safe and accessible environment to learn, grow and succeed. By working together to eliminate barriers and strengthen family ties, participants create a healthier, more dynamic future.

**Current Goals/Objectives:**

- Increase number of participants becoming employed and/or continuing education (80% in 2014; 83.3% in the first three months of 2015)
- Vastly improve social connectedness
- Improve life skills
- Increase financial awareness
- Decrease involvement with the criminal justice system
- Decrease recidivism rate
- Decrease involvement with Job and Family Services (SNAPP benefits and financial assistance)

**Long-term Community Impact (2 to 4 years):**

- Reduced generational and situational poverty
- Reduced substance abuse/addiction
- Improved public safety
- Reduced recidivism.
- Improved workforce productivity
- Improved academic success and graduation rates
- Improved health and wellness of adults and children



Donna Gibson,  
BOP and Parent  
Support Coordinator  
(740) 788-0300  
parentsupportbop@mhalc.org

## PARENT SUPPORT



We all aspire for peace in our families, but there are always going to be hurdles, questions and seasons of tribulation. Our children are not *trying* to be bad, and they cannot be looked at as "little adults". Children are simply developing their strengths and exercising an increasingly new independence as they grow up! Although 18 years of raising a child seems like a really long time, before we blink they are grown.



Parenting classes provide parents with decision making tools and consistent support as a family grows. From infancy, to preschool, to middle school and high school, to graduation, parents face many trials.

As challenging as these year are, they go by very fast and we don't get them back. We have to use the time we are given wisely because, before we know it, this time has passed as the children move on to begin their own adult lives.



To sign up for Parenting classes, call  
Donna Gibson at (740) 788-0300